

Room 56-423

Ext. 4707

March 13, 1970

To the Editor
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, New York

Dear sir:

While President Nixon speaks of the drug problem as an educational one (New York Times, March 12), his Department of Justice is rejecting all advice from educators, medical scientists and lawyers and insisting on an essentially criminal approach to the problem.

A subcommittee of the U. S. House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee has recently concluded hearings on the new omnibus drug bill, H.R. 13743, which would transfer to the Attorney General the sole authority to determine which drugs are subject to abuse and which researchers may study them.

This ~~same~~ bill includes the irrational and probably unconstitutional "no-knock" provision permitting police, upon warrant by a judge, to enter unannounced into private premises. This provision makes both police officers and private citizens potentially subject to blind murderous shooting.

According to a UPI dispatch of March 3, at the close of the hearings, Mr. John Ingersoll, head of the Narcotics Bureau of the Justice Department, opposed and derided the lengthy testimony by medical and legal experts, who had favored a major role for HEW Department in drug regulation and education. According to the Justice Department, "The ultimate decision to bring a drug under control has more legal implications than it does medical ones." One Congressman, Rep. Peter Kyros of Maine, stated that the Administration's unbending stand was "kind of stunning to me in the light of the testimony of so many doctors."

The straight criminal sanction approach will not work for the drug problem just as it did not work when tried for alcohol. It breeds black market, organized crime, and contempt for the law -- just as prohibition did. Meanwhile, this approach is being used by Mr. Mitchell's Department for further threats to our civil liberties: legalized violation of the home privacy and encroachment by the Justice Department over an area that demands enlightened educational and public health approach.

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